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March 12, 2012

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H. *JE Fielding mo*  
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **MEDICATION ASSISTED THERAPY**

On December 13, 2011, your Board approved to extend the use of Vivitrol and instructed the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) to report back in 90-days on policy changes needed to expand the availability of Vivitrol in public coverage programs such as Medi-Cal and on recommendations on how Vivitrol can be purchased by contract providers at the most affordable price.

**Policy Changes**

DPH has been working with a number of agencies to expand the availability of Vivitrol in Los Angeles County. Below are highlights of the efforts to date:

- In California, providers are required to use the electronic Treatment Authorization Request (eTAR) system in order to receive reimbursement for Vivitrol doses administered to Medi-Cal eligible patients. In collaboration with contracted programs and Alkermes, Inc., the manufacturer of Vivitrol, DPH is working with the California Department of Health Care Services to improve the process of the eTAR system for Vivitrol doses. Thus far, progress has been made in improving the processing time for eTAR submissions for LA Care and Health Net patients.
- Studies have shown that the orally administered form of naltrexone is not as successful of a treatment as Vivitrol due to the significant side effects and the lack of compliance by patients to take multiple doses daily. Currently, under the Drug Medi-Cal program, only the oral naltrexone is reimbursable. Therefore, DPH is working with the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs to add Vivitrol to the Drug Medi-Cal pharmaceutical formulary. The County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Association of California also supports this action as other counties have expressed interest to add Vivitrol to their treatment approaches. This interest is largely based on other counties seeing the success of the Los Angeles County experience.
- DPH is working with the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to include Vivitrol in treating co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders for persons in the County's Public Safety Realignment Program (under Assembly Bill 109). On February 21, 2012 DMH and DPH submitted a proposal to make an initial Vivitrol dose available to prisoners released to the County and entering

treatment for co-occurring disorders under the AB 109 program. The proposal is currently under consideration by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The needed administrative changes may take several months to implement.

- On September 15, 2011, DPH was awarded a three-year drug court enhancement funding grant by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. On February 21, 2012, your Board approved the acceptance of this funding which makes Vivitrol available to all participants in the County's drug court treatment programs. Participants in the Co-Occurring Disorders Treatment Court and Second Chance Women's Re-Entry Treatment Court at the Antelope Valley Rehabilitation Center who have already used Vivitrol have had positive results. This funding will allow more clients access to Vivitrol.

### **Pricing**

Currently, DPH contract providers are able to purchase Vivitrol doses for medically uninsured persons at a discounted price that is considerably less than the retail price. However, pricing under the federal Health Resources and Services Administration 340B program for federally-qualified health centers and qualified hospitals is lower. DPH is working with the Department of Health Services to explore how contract providers can access the 340B price.

### **Next Steps**

As instructed by the motion, DPH will provide a 12-month report to your Board on the items above and other items, including the implementation of pilot projects for use of Vivitrol and other medication-assisted treatment approaches with drinking-driver offenders and in jail and probation settings. Also included in the report will be results from the evaluation conducted by the Integrated Substance Abuse Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). The evaluation focuses on the efficacy of Vivitrol as a cost-effective approach to improve medium- and long-term patient outcomes. The study design has passed the Institutional Review Boards at DPH and UCLA, and patient data collection has begun.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on this matter, please let me know.

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PH:1201:004

c: Chief Executive Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors